

Drexel Hill, PA – Taking part in a nationwide effort to give back to the service members and families who have made selfless sacrifices on behalf of our nation, a local landscaper donated his time and resources to decorate the home of a Delaware County Marine injured in combat in Afghanistan. Vince Del Vacchio, a Broomall resident and small businessman who owns Del Vacchio Landscapes Inc. in Edgmont, joined with Christmas Décor, the nation's largest outdoor lighting and decorating franchise, in an effort to literally brighten the lives of men and women of the United States Armed Forces and their families with impressive displays of Christmas lights, wreaths and ornaments. To recognize this admirable effort, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) drafted a Congressional Citation expressing his gratitude to Del Vacchio and honoring Corporal Matthew Sondermann and his family, the recipients of this generous and thoughtful act. —

“The bravery demonstrated by Corporal Sondermann overseas, the commitment shown by his family to him and this nation, and the altruistic spirit of Mr. Del Vacchio are all inspiring,” said Congressman Sestak. “It is a great reflection of the people of our community that a tragic incident involving one of our own has resulted in an outpouring of support for this great American family. This has included the decoration of Corporal Sondermann's home as well as a \$500 donation by the Ladies Auxiliary of Catholic War Veterans Post 731, a group that contacted my office about assisting Veterans.”

The Congressman's District Representative, Chip Ridewood, read the citation at the presentation, which took place on the porch at the home of Corporal Sondermann's mother, Linda Araouzou. Earlier in the morning, Del Vacchio and his team decorated the house of Erich Sondermann, Matthew's father.

“Patriotism has many forms and this citation recognizes a resident of the 7th Congressional District who reflects the highest ideals of ‘citizen-patriot,’” said Congressman Sestak in the citation. “As the nation fights two wars and hundreds of thousands of families spend this Christmas holiday season separated by great distance and the strains of those wars, Mr. Vince Del Vacchio and the employees of Del Vacchio Landscapes, Inc. stepped forward to thank a local family that suffered grievous wounds fighting terrorist insurgents in Afghanistan. For months Corporal Matt Sondermann, USMC, has fought valiantly to recover from his wounds and his parents set aside their careers to dedicate themselves to supporting their son's recovery. As the Christmas season approached, Vince Del Vacchio stepped forward with the Christmas Décor ‘Decorated Family Program’ and offered to literally brighten the lives of the Sondermanns in appreciation for that family's devotion to one another and our nation. For that, the citizens of the 7th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, are deeply grateful to Vince Del Vacchio and take this opportunity to say thank you and wish he and his family great joy and happiness Christmas season.”

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.

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